

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SSM-05
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R 021341Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5104
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 1514

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS, LE, PFOR
SUBJECT: JERUSALEM POST STORY ON U.N. FORCES IN SOUTH LEBANON

1. JERUSALEM POST MARCH 2 CARRIED STORY HEADLINED
"LITTLE POINT IN CREATING U.N. FORCE FOR LEBANESE BORDER"
BY DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT LANDAU AND MILITARY CORRESPONDENT
GOODMAN. AS THE ARTICLE WRAPS TOGETHER ISRAELI REACTION
THUS FAR TO THE IDEA AND ANALYSES SOME OF THE QUESTIONS
AT ISSUE IN CONSIDERING IT, WE ARE SENDING THE FOLLOWING
EXCERPT.

2. BEGIN TEXT: OFFICIAL JERUSALEM IS THOROUGHLY NON-
PLUSSED BY LEBANON'S PROPOSAL FOR THE STATIONING OF A
U.N. FORCE IN THE SOUTH OF THE COUNTRY. WHILE BEIRUT
FOREIGN MINISTER BUTROS IS ENERGETICALLY CANVASSING
THE IDEA IN MEETINGS WITH THE BIG FOUR AMBASSADORS,
ANALYSTS HERE ARE TRYING TO ESTABLISH WHAT KIND
OF FORCE LEBANON HAS IN MIND AND WHAT ITS POLITICAL
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AND MILITARY IMPLICATIONS MIGHT BE.

3. REACTION SO FAR HAS BEEN ON THREE LEVELS:
--OFFICIALLY, NEWSMEN ARE TOLD, ISRAEL HAS HEARD
NOTHING ABOUT THE LEBANESE PROPOSAL FROM ANY
AUTHORITATIVE OR COMPETENT THIRD PARTY--AND THUS
IT CANNOT COMMENT.

--SEMI-OFFICIALLY, THE ISRAEL POSITION IS THAT THE FACTIONAL VIOLENCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON IS AN INTERNAL LEBANESE PROBLEM, AND ITS SOLUTION REQUIRES THE ESTABLISHMENT (OR RE-ESTABLISHMENT) OF AN INDIGENOUS LEBANESE FORCE, NOT THE INTRODUCTION OF A U.N. FORCE. THERE IS, MOREOVER, NO NEED FOR A U.N. FORCE ON THE BORDER--BECAUSE THE BORDER IS QUIET AT PRESENT, AND EVEN IF IT WEREN'T, A U.N. PRESENCE WOULD NOT BE AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF KEEPING THE PEACE.

--INFORMALLY, OFFICIALS ADMIT THAT IF LEBANON SUCCEEDED IN PERSUADING THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO CREATE SUCH A FORCE, TO BE STATIONED SOLELY ON THE LEBANESE SIDE OF THE BORDER, THERE WOULD BE LITTLE ISRAEL COULD DO OR SAY ABOUT IT.

4. HARD INFORMATION ON THE SPECIFICS OF THE LEBANESE PROPOSAL IS APPARENTLY DIFFICULT TO COME BY: EVEN THE U.N. PERSONNEL IN THE AREA ARE IN THE DARK SO FAR. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE CONCEPTION IS OF AN INTERNAL POLICING FORCE, SUCH AS OPERATED BRIEFLY IN LEBANON IN 1958, IN THE CONGO IN 1960, AND IN CYPRUS FROM 1964--OR A BORDER PATROLLING FORCE SIMILAR TO THE UNEF ON THE SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN BORDERS.

5. IF IT IS THE FORMER THEN ISRAEL'S ATTITUDE WOULD UNCLASSIFIED

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CERTAINLY BECOME MUCH MORE ENTHUSIASTIC, ACCORDING TO ONE WELL-PLACED SOURCE. A POLICING FORCE WOULD HAVE TO BE OF CONSIDERABLE STRENGTH, AND WOULD PROBABLY TAKE OVER, AT LEAST IN PART OF THE COUNTRY, FROM THE "INTER-ARAB FORCE," THE MAINLY SYRIAN FORCE NOW FIRMLY IN CONTROL OF MOST OF LEBANON.

6. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE THE SECURITY COUNCIL APPROVING THIS KIND OF MAJOR ENTERPRISE--UNLESS ONE OF THE MAJOR POWERS PARTICULARLY FAVORS IT. SOME OBSERVERS THEORIZE THAT FRANCE MAY BE BEHIND THE LEBANESE INITIATIVE. THEY POINT OUT THAT FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUINGUAD WAS IN BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS ONLY LAST WEEK, AND MAY HAVE BROACHED THE IDEA THEN.

7. FRANCE, ACCORDING TO THIS THEORY, WOULD SUPPLY MOST OF THE MEN FOR THE PROJECTED U.N. FORCE AND IN THIS WAY WOULD ACHIEVE ITS MUCH-DESIRED AIM OF

PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE MEIDEASTERN AREAS
OF ITS FORMER INFLUENCE.

8. IF BEIRUT IS PROPOSING A U.N. BORDER PATROLLING
FORCE, ITS AIM MIGHT BE TO ABSOLVE ITSELF OF RES-
PONSIBILITY FOR A FUTURE RESUMPTION OF TERRORIST
INCURSIONS INTO ISRAEL. BEIRUT MAY CALCULATE, TOO,
THAT A U.N. PRESENCE ON THE BORDER WOULD HAMPER AND
RESTRICT ISRAELI REPRISAL ACTION.

9. ISRAEL, AT ANY RATE, IS ADAMANT ON ONE POINT:
IT WILL NOT ALLOW A U.N. PRESENCE ON ITS OWN SIDE
OF THE BORDERGM

10. EVEN NOW, THE FIVE UNTSO (UNITED NATIONS TRUCE

SUPERVISORY ORGANIZATION) WATCH-POST ON THE LEBANESE
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BORDER ARE ALL SITUATED ON THE LEBANESE SIDE OF THE
LINE, AT ISRAEL'S INSISTENCE.

11. MILITARY OBSERVERS IN JERUSALEM FEEL THAT A U.N.
FORCE ON THE LEBANESE FRONTIER WOULD NOT BE IN
ISRAEL'S MILITARY INTEREST.

12. THE PRSENCE OF SUCH A FORCE, IT IS FELT, WOULD
IMPEDE ISRAEL'S RETAILATORY ABILITY, WHILE IT WOULD
CONTINUE TO ALLOW THE TERRORISTS TO OPERATE AGAINST
OBJECTIVES INSIDE ISRAEL WITH RELATIVE IMPUNITY.
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